U.S. Second Fleet /
NATO Striking Fleet Atlantic

Joint Operations Center

The Joint Operations Center (JOC) is the hub for maintaining situational awareness for the Commander. Manned continuously, there is a myriad of information systems in use. The watch station responsible for JOC Operations and for keeping the Commander updated regarding units in his area of responsibility is the Battle Watch Captain (BWC). The BWC is normally an O-4 or O-5 and during normal peacetime operations is assisted by a Staff Duty Officer (SDO) who is normally an E-7 or E-8. Their responsibilities are to monitor all assets assigned to Commander Second Fleet/Striking Fleet Atlantic and keep the Commander updated on the status of those assets.

During exercises and real world operations, the complexion of the JOC changes dramatically. A BWC remains in charge of JOC Operations and is responsible for keeping the Commander informed of the current situation regarding the operations. The BWC is primarily assisted by an Assistant Battle Watch Captain (ABWC). Also manning the JOC are personnel assigned to assist the BWC by monitoring functional areas including Land Operations, Maritime Operations, Amphibious Readiness Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit Operations, Air Operations, and Special Operations. Personnel responsible for providing support in Public Affairs, Information Management, Legal/Rules of Engagement, and Intelligence Support further assist the BWC. These personnel have information systems that they use including U.S. Classified LAN, Unclassified LAN, and NATO LAN computers. Additionally there are three different command and control systems in use; a U.S. system called Global Command and Control System – Maritime (GCCS-M), a NATO system called Maritime Command and Control Information System (MCCIS), and Air Defense Systems Integrator (ADSI), depending on the required functionality.

To the uninitiated, the JOC looks like a department store television sales area. There are lots of large (37") monitors and even more small computer monitors. Besides the main functionality of JOC Operations, there is conference area seating approximately 20 people and a Video Teleconference Suite (VTC) that seats approximately 25 people. The latter allows the Commander to conduct video teleconferencing with almost any US or NATO Headquarters from anywhere in the world.

In addition to information systems, there is a vast array of communication systems, including over one hundred telephone lines, twelve satellite radios, twenty four high frequency radios, and thirteen very high frequency radios. These comms systems

use both military and commercial satellite accesses to support the mission of the Commander.

The Command Ship also has the capability to host up to three Component Commanders with both a planning area and a separate Operations Center. Normally embarked for exercises is the Joint Forces Air Component Commander (JFACC), capable of producing the Air Tasking Order (ATO) from an afloat platform in support of the air campaign. To support the JFACC Commander MOUNT WHITNEY boasts an Area Air Defense Commander (AADC) module that functions as the Operations Center for the JFACC. The AADC module is a prototype system that uses Tactical Digital Information Links (TADILs) to give a graphic display in three dimensions at near real time. The other two Component Commander Planning and Operations Centers are configurable in a "plug and play" style that allows the space to be configured to meet that particular Component Commanders needs.